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Letter dated 29 August 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the forty-seventh monthly report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The present report covers the period from 23 July to 22 August 2017.

As reported last month, the security situation now allows the safe access of the Secretariat to confirm the condition of the last two stationary above-ground facilities of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. I welcome the fact that, in his note to the OPCW Executive Council, the Director-General confirms that the OPCW Technical Secretariat has started the preparatory work for carrying out an inspection to confirm the condition of those two facilities. I look forward to the completion of this important work.

Work has also continued in regard to the long-standing issues relating to the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic. I am encouraged by the fact that it has now been decided to hold high-level consultations to clarify these issues, from 16 to 18 September 2017 in The Hague, and I trust that they will lead to tangible results. I again urge the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate fully with OPCW in order that these issues may be resolved.

The work of the OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic is continuing in regard to credible allegations among more than 60 alleged incidents of the use of chemical weapons reported from December 2015 until the end of March 2017.

The continuing allegations of the use of chemical weapons, in spite of universal condemnation by the international community and Security Council resolutions condemning such use in the strongest terms, are both gravely concerning and deeply discouraging. In this regard, I reiterate my calls for the perpetrators of such acts to be identified and brought to justice. Without accountability, there is impunity. Impunity for the use of weapons such as these is simply intolerable.

I am pleased to note that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism continues its in-depth investigations into the incidents involving the use of chemical weapons in Um-Housh and Khan Shaykhun. I reiterate that quality and timely information is critical for the Mechanism to implement its mandate. I once again urge all Member States to support the Mechanism in every way they can.

Please recycle

I believe that the efforts of this independent, impartial, professional and objective Mechanism can contribute to the collective commitment of the Security Council to ensure that those who continue to threaten international peace and security through the unacceptable use of chemical weapons are held accountable for their horrific actions.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1, and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 July 2017 to 22 August 2017 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

Background

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. This, the forty-seventh monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 23 July 2017 to 22 August 2017.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) The Secretariat has verified the destruction of 25 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. As reported previously, the Secretariat, further to information received from the Syrian Arab Republic in the form of a note verbale, has started the preparatory work to carry out an inspection to confirm the condition of the last two stationary above-ground facilities.

(b) On 16 August 2017, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its forty-fifth monthly report (EC-86/P/NAT.2, dated 16 August 2017) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As reported previously, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

8. As stated by the Director-General in his opening statement to the Council at its Eighty-Fifth Session (EC-85/DG.28*, dated 11 July 2017), an invitation was sent to the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, H.E. Dr Faisal Mekdad, and his delegation, to resume high-level consultations to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with Council decision EC-81/DEC.4 and paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5. The consultations will take place at the OPCW Headquarters from 16 to 18 September 2017 and the Director-General will report to the Council on these consultations.

9. As reported previously, the Secretariat has commenced planning for the second round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) in the Syrian Arab Republic, to be conducted in the second half of 2017 in accordance with paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

10. The Steering Committee, which is comprised of representatives of the OPCW, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and the Syrian Arab Republic, will meet in Beirut, Lebanon, from 24 to 26 August 2017, to discuss the support services provided by UNOPS pursuant to the tripartite agreement (between UNOPS, the OPCW, and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic) and the contribution agreement (between the OPCW and UNOPS), as well as other matters related to the implementation of the activities set out in these agreements.

11. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

12. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

13. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of

the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT). As at the cut-off date of this report, the total contribution stood at EUR 9.8 million, with a forthcoming additional donation from Canada of EUR 1.68 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the European Union.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

14. As reported previously, the FFM finalised its work regarding the allegations of use of chemical weapons on 4 April 2017 in the Khan Shaykhun area of southern Idlib in the Syrian Arab Republic and submitted its report on this incident (S/1510/2017, dated 29 June 2017) for the consideration of States Parties.

15. As announced by the Director-General in his closing remarks to the Council at its Fifty-Fifth Meeting, a Note entitled "Analysis Results of the Samples Provided by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in Relation to the Alleged Incident in Khan Shaykhun, Syrian Arab Republic, April 2017" (S/1521/2017, dated 28 July 2017) was issued by the Secretariat. This report concludes that "there was consistency in the results" in that the four laboratories (the SSRC, the OPCW Laboratory and two designated laboratories) that carried out the analysis identified sarin, DIMP, and hexamine in soil samples.

16. During the period under review, the FFM also continued to carry out its inquiries about other allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 (dated 4 February 2015) and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015). As reported previously, the FFM is focusing its work on credible allegations among over 60 alleged incidents reported from December 2015 until the end of March 2017, on which information and materials are available.

Conclusion

17. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM and on the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues, as well as on the confirmation of the status of the two stationary above-ground facilities, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.